A

SERMON

CONCERNING

The Wisdom of Fearing GOD;

Preach'd at

SALISBURY,

ON

SUNDAY, *July* XXX. 1693.

BEING

The Time of the Assizes.

By E. dward YOUNG, Fellow of *Winchester*-College, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

Publish'd at the Request of the Lawyers.

LONDON,

Printed by *T. W.* for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's Head in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, 1693.

A SERMON

CONCERNING

The Wisdom of Fearing GOD;

Preach'd at

SALISBURY,

ON

SUNDAY, July XXX. 1693.

BEING

The Time of the Assizes.

By E. YOUNG, Fellow of Winchester-College, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

Publish'd at the Request of the Hatoyers.

LONDON,

Printed by T. H. for Walter Kettilby, at the Bishop's Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1693

TO THE

Worthily Honoured

THE

SERJEANTS,

And other Council of the

WESTERN CIRCUIT.

SIRS,

WHEN I received Notice of your Desire, That this Sermon should be publish'd, under the Style of being publish'd at the Request of the Lawyers (as is prefixt in the Title Page) I look'd upon it as a Desire intended to express not so much

your

your Approbation of the Preacher, as your Zeal for the Subject, and the ſtipulation of your Aſſiſtance to promote the Fear of God, *and a declaration of your ſelves to be Profeſſors of the Religious, as well as you are of the Civil Wiſdom: This being a Deſign ſuitable to the Honour of your Profeſſion, and to your known Perſonal Abilities; which as they give you greater Power to ſerve the Intereſts of Religion, ſo they lay a greater Obligation upon you to do it. Wherefore in combination with your Piety, as well as obſequiouſneſs to your Deſire, I publiſh my Thoughts upon this Subject; not as mine, but (as they are by Eſpouſal) Yours; to the end that Your Reputation may give them Credit, and make way for their Reception, and conferr on them the Felicity of doing Good in the World. If they ſhall do any Good (which is a moſt deſirable,*

but

but caſual Event) I muſt impute it to your aſſerting them; for Authority may reach Mens Affections, when bare Arguments cannot: And therefore I humbly recommend them to that part of your Patronage, and your ſelves to the Bleſſing of God for a Requital: Who am, with all Reſpect,

SIRS,

Your very Humble Servant,

E. YOUNG.

A SER-

but called Envy) I must impute it to your offering them; for Authority may reach Men's Affections when Arguments cannot: And therefore I humbly recommend them to that part of your Patronage, and your Reason to the Duty of God for a Reward:—Who am with profound Respect,

SIRS,

Your very Humble Servant,

A

SERMON

CONCERNING

The Wisdom of Fearing GOD;

PREACHED

At *SALISBURY, July* 30. 1693.

JOB xxviii. 28.

And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

THE *fear of the Lord, that is wisdom*; is a Sentence we meet with in several places of Scripture, and delivered by several of the holy Writers; so that it seems to have been in proverbial use amongst the Ancients; and it is a probable

Conjecture, that they derived this Proverb by Tradition from GOD himſelf, and that *Adam* was the *Man* in the Text, to whom it was firſt ſpoken: For when *Adam* had eaten the forbidden Fruit, which he was induc'd to do from the hopes of being made *wiſe* by it, it was then (as ſome have thought) that God thus admoniſh'd him, *The fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom*; this Admonition properly ſerving to ſet before him the groſſneſs of his Miſtake, when he thought that any thing which made him *ſin*, could poſſibly make him *wiſe*.

If this were ſpoken to our Firſt Parent, we cannot doubt, but that the Truth of it entred into his Soul with a full conviction: The ſhame and terror which he felt within himſelf, for having departed from the fear of God in one inſtance, throughly convinc'd him, that there was nothing ſo wiſe, as to fear him always.

And there are certain Seaſons, wherein every Son of *Adam*, even the moſt looſe and careleſs, does readily deliver himſelf up to the ſame Conviction: Scarce any one in the World, when lying under the ſenſe of *Guilt*, or

or the fear of *Punishment*, or the destitution of *Worldly Comforts*, or the apprehension of *Approaching Death*, but will soon acknowledg, That the *fear of God* is the true *Wisdom*, and that all other Attainments are but Folly, in comparison of it. What therefore all men at some time or other confess for a Truth, and most men with a Regret, that they have no more consider'd it; That it is the prudent man's part to consider at all times, and to set it before him for a governing Principle of his Life.

We may observe by the way, That if *the Fear of God* be *Wisdom*, it is a happy step and advantage towards the Duty, that Nature has planted in us a common Ambition to be wise. To be wise, is the thing we long for above all other; as (on the contrary) to be accounted Fools is the most hated of all Reproaches: And this is an Appetite as universal as Hunger it self: So that the difference betwixt Wise men and Fools lyes not so much in the difference of their Affections towards Wisdom, but only in the Controversie about what *Wisdom* is, and wherein it consists. Which Controversie my Text

comes in to determine, and I ſhall deliver the full ſence of it in theſe two Propoſitions.

I. That *the fear of the Lord is wiſdom*; and,
II. That it is the *Only Wiſdom*; for ſo much the emphaſis of the Relative imports, ---*The fear of the Lord that is wiſdom*: As much as to ſay, There is no Wiſdom without it.

I. I begin with the firſt,---*The fear of the Lord is wiſdom.*

To fear God (if we will ſtate the nature of it) conſiſts in the having ſuch a due ſenſe of the Majeſty, and Holineſs, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God, as ſhall make us throughly fearful to offend him; for each of theſe Attributes of God are proper to raiſe a ſuitable Fear in every conſidering Mind: His Majeſty, a Fear leſt we affront it by being irreverent; his Holineſs, a Fear leſt we offend it by being carnal; his Juſtice, a Fear leſt we provoke it by being preſumptuous; and his Goodneſs, a Fear leſt we loſe it by being unthankful. But through all, the ceaſing to offend God is neceſſary, for otherwiſe

we

we cannot be ſaid to fear Him: And therefore in the Holy Scripture we have the Fear of God defined by *departing from evil*; as if its very Eſſence conſiſted in this neceſſary Effect. So *Solomon* tells us, *The fear of God is to depart from evil:* And the ſame definition is imply'd in the Text, where the *fear of the Lord*, and *to depart from evil*, are uſed only as two different expreſſions to ſignifie the ſame thing.

And from this Obſervation it follows, that Wicked Men can never be ſaid to *fear God*, tho' they do certainly fear his Puniſhment; but where the Puniſhment only is *feared*, there the Perſon is properly *hated*. I confeſs, that to *hate* God carries a Horror in the very ſound of it, and implies a Guilt of ſuch a dye, as few Sinners will own to have been in their Intention. But when we conſider that a Man cannot continue in *deliberate Sin*, but that in the mean time his Heart muſt needs give him to wiſh, that there were no God to puniſh him; and that ſuch a Wiſh is Formal Hatred: all we can conclude upon it is this, That our Sins are ſeldom ſtinted by our own Intention, but when we give Guilt leave

leave to go *ſo far*, it will go *farther* without our leave; and ſo thoſe ill habits will inſenſibly lead us on to pure Enmity with God, in which, at firſt, we intended no more than the bare pleaſing of our Paſſions. But the *Fear of God* is a ſure Guard againſt all theſe Miſchiefs; for, when once this Fear has made us take care not to offend God, our Souls will naturally tend to love him, from the proſpect of thoſe gracious Promiſes, wherein ſuch as fear him are ſecure of a growing Intereſt.

Now, the Wiſdom of fearing God will be manifeſted, 1*ſt*, by conſidering the Reaſonableneſs, and, 2*dly*, the Advantages of it.

1*ſt*, I ſhall conſider the Reaſonableneſs of the Duty. God Almighty gave us the paſſion of Fear on purpoſe to make us wiſe; and its ſubſerviency to Wiſdom is viſible in the whole courſe of Human Affairs: For, ſet aſide *Fear*, and there is no Providence in management, no Weight in Counſel, no Prudence in Election, no Diſcretion in Acting; all runs to Raſhneſs and Folly, and ends in expoſing us to all manner of Evils. As therefore in a Town alarm'd by an Enemy, a

Sen-

Sentinel is ſet to watch their Approaches, and to prevent the danger of a ſurprize; ſo, in regard of thoſe many Evils and Dangers to which we are obnoxious in *this Life*, God has ſet *Fear* in our Soul for a Sentinel, to watch when and which way they come, and to give us Caution that we may avoid them. But the ſame God that has given us *Fear* for a Caution againſt Evils in general, has, in the mean time, given us notice, That His Diſpleaſure is the *greateſt* of *all Evils*: and therefore as we account it a point of *Wiſdom* to be watchful againſt other Evils, ſo it is neceſſarily the chiefeſt point of Wiſdom to be watchful againſt *this*.

The *Fear of God* is of ſo *great importance* to us, that God ſeems to have intended a *gracious intimation* of it in every motion of our *Natural Fears*. Our *Natural Fears* (we know) are either ſudden or deliberate; the ſudden are ſuch as come upon us ſurprizingly, and without deliberation, and of theſe we may obſerve, that they are very often immoderate, boundleſs, and ungovernable; and as they prevent our deliberation in their coming, ſo they often baffle it being come, and

are

are not to be controul'd by any power of Reaſoning. How wonderfully will a man ſometimes be affected at the hearing of a ſudden noiſe in the *Night?* his Blood runs back, his Spirits ſink, his Soul melts within him, and a Horror paſſes thro' every part of his Body. Now, ſuch a Fear as *this* ſeems abſolutely unreaſonable, a Wiſe and Good Man would not fear any Accident of Life, no, nor Death it ſelf, at ſuch a rate; and yet a Wiſe and Good Man cannot ſometimes hinder ſuch a *Fear* from riſing upon a meer *Bugbear occaſion.* Now, how unreaſonable ſoever this *Fear* ſeems to be, it carries a moſt reaſonable Admonition along with it. And as the Sentinel, when ſet, has a *Word* given him, whereby to diſtinguiſh his proper Officer; ſo GOD, when he ſet *this Fear* in *us*, ſeems to have given it his own Word, a Word which it *whiſpers* to *us* upon each of its *ſurprizing motions*, (*viz.*) *Thus it is that a man ought to fear God*; *Thus* it is that a Man *ought* to fear God, becauſe *ev'n as a man feareth, ſo is his diſpleaſure*: Ev'n as a Man feareth, when he feareth moſt boundleſly, moſt extravagantly, *ſo is his diſpleaſure*; his Diſpleaſure

pleaſure bears proportion to ſuch a *Fear* as this, tho' nothing in Nature does ſo beſides it. Thus God has made nothing in *vain*, no, not our vaineſt Fears, from whom, if *we* will give our ſelves leiſure to reflect, we may learn ſo important a Leſſon.

Our deliberate and juſt Fears are as juſt to the ſame intimation; and each of their motions point out God to the firſt glance of our Reaſoning: For, if it be reaſonable to fear Want, how much more reaſonable is it to fear Him, whoſe Bounty is the Fountain of all our Supplies? If it be reaſonable to fear Diſappointments, how much more to fear Him, whoſe Providence diſpoſes the iſſue of all we project? If it be reaſonable to fear Diſgrace, how much more to fear Him, whoſe eſtimation imports more towards it than that of all the World beſide? If it be reaſonable to fear Pain, and other Inconveniences of Life, how much more to fear Him, whoſe Pleaſure determines both all our Eaſe, and all our Sufferings? In a word, if it be reaſonable to *fear them that can kill the body, how much more him, who after he hath killed, can caſt into hell?* This then is the *Moral*, and this is the

Leſſon of all our Fears, *Fear God:* And if it be not Wiſdom to do ſo, it is equally no Folly to kick againſt the Pricks, to embrace a Scorpion, to run under a falling Tower, into the mouth of a Lyon, into the bottomleſs Pit.

Thus much for the Reaſonableneſs of the Duty; let us, *2dly*, conſider its Advantages.

And to give my *Thoughts* a Track in this wide Field, I ſhall confine them to this Particular, *viz. That the Fear of God is the cure of all other Fears*; and when I have ſaid this, I have imply'd a *mighty Advantage*, becauſe *Fear* (when looſe from God) is undoubtedly both the *greateſt Burden* and the *greateſt Snare* that Human Life is acquainted with. I call *Fear* the *greateſt Burden of Life*, becauſe of its natural torturing power; and I call it the *greateſt Snare of Life*, becauſe of its moral corrupting power. Let us reflect a little upon them both.

1. *Fear* carries with it ſuch a torturing power, that could we but eſtimate the Conditions of all men together, we ſhould find that the World is at all times more miſerable from what it *fears*, than from what it *feels*.

Nay,

Nay, *Fear* is ſuch a Tyrant, that let us feel never ſo much, it will ſtill heap on weight, and make that which *may be* worſe than that which *is*. As the Author of the *Book of Wiſdom* tells us concerning the *Egyptians*, That when they lay under their *grievous Plague* of Darkneſs, yet *their Fear was more grievous than the Darkneſs*.

But, 2. Beſide this torturing power, *Fear* has in it a corrupting and debauching power, whereby its moral Miſchiefs come to be exceſſive; for, *Fear* is the main Rock upon which moſt men ſplit their Faith, their Honour, their Integrity; all are ſacrificed to ſome ſort of cowardly compliances, and Men become vitious perhaps leſs from the love of being ſo, than from want of Courage to be otherwiſe. And this is a ſufficient Reaſon why, *Rev.* 21. 8. the Fearful are ſet firſt in the Liſt of thoſe that go to Perdition.

So that tho' *Fear* was given us on purpoſe to make us wiſe, yet it never effects that purpoſe, till ſuch time as it is fixed upon God, and receives Virtue from that ſupreme Object, to govern its motions, in reference to all the reſt; for the *fear of God*, like a wiſe

Monarch ſet up in a diſturbed State, compoſes all the Tumults of vulgar Fears, and keeping them ſubordinate to it ſelf, renders them both harmleſs and uſeful to their proper Ends.

'Tis a ſad miſtaken Project (tho' yet it be a common one) to caſt off the *Fear of God* in order to be free; for, in ſo doing, Men only paſs from one Fear which is without Torment, to a multitude that are without Relief: As *Cain*, when he had departed from the Preſence of God, became terrified with the preſence of every thing he met. And tho' all men in *Cain*'s caſe are not ſo fearful as *Cain* was, yet they make the miſchief equal by being more ſtupid than he.

How galling muſt the Fears about the things of this Life needs be to one who carries no eye to the Bleſſings of a future? They make the World look like a Shaft thruſt into a man's Body, which *grieves* and *tortures* while it ſtays in, and when it is drawn out, draws away Life along with it: But he that fears God has a Preſervative againſt the fear of all Worldly Evils; for he fears them not before they come, becauſe he is ſecure of the

the Good Providence of God on his ſide, and when they come, he has wherewithal to *break* their blow, becauſe he has aſſurance of Recompence at leaſt, if not of Relief.

But eſpecially, how amazing muſt the fear of Death be to him that fears not God? Death! that, like a dark paſſage to a comfortleſs Priſon, puts an end to all he would have, and a beginning to all he would not. I confeſs indeed, that Sin, ev'n while it is *drawing on* ſuch formidable Conſequences as theſe, has likewiſe Arts to fence off their Affrightment: For, as there *is* ſometimes an *Exceſs of Fear*, that *betrays all the Succours of Reaſon*, ſo there *is* ſometimes on the other hand ſuch a *Hardineſs*, and want of *Fear*, as ſtifles all the *Actings* of *Reaſon*: And hence it comes to paſs, that ſome Men, who are altogether *careleſs* how they live, do yet ſeem as indifferent about the Concern of dying. The Scripture gives us the Emblem of ſuch hardy Spirits, in *a Horſe ruſhing to the Battel*, and *an Ox going to the ſlaughter*; Creatures that are not *frighted* with *Conſequences*, becauſe they are not capable of thinking: Which may likewiſe ſerve for an intimation

to

to us, That when a man fears not God, and at the ſame time fears not Death, it is not Courage in him, but Brutality; for, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any Guard againſt the Fear of Dying, to thoſe who are reaſonable, and aware of the Iſſues of Dying, but only the Fear of God, which ſecures againſt all other Fears: And as to this in particular, it makes Death reſemble a Viper, when its Poyſon is whipt out; its very form indeed brings ſome Horror to our Nature, but Reaſon tells us in the mean time, That it is ſo far from doing harm, that it is altogether medicinal and reſtorative.

By the way, it is remarkable, how this *Paſſion of Fear* will not ſuffer it ſelf to be ſlighted by any of the *Children of Pride*, and therefore it takes a mocking Revenge upon thoſe that ſeem to ſlight it moſt: for we may obſerve, concerning ſuch as fear not GOD, and pretend likewiſe not to fear Death, that yet they extreamly fear the vain Breath of the vaineſt Men, which they falſly ſet up to be the Standard of Honour: This Breath (as deſpiſable as it is) they fear as much as any others can fear Death, and will run themſelves

ſelves into greater Miſchiefs to eſcape it. Whereas, in truth, nothing is honourable neither, but only the *Fear of God*, and ſuch Offices as are conſequential to it, if God himſelf may paſs for the Standard, who ſays, *Them that honour me I will honour*. And therefore whatſoever is acted contrary to this Principle, and whatſoever Men dare, contrary to the Rules of Piety, it can be no other than diſhonourable and weak.

As for the debauching power of *Fear*, it is deplorable what Multitudes it brings under captivity to Sin. The Fear of being laught at, of being reproach'd, of being frown'd upon; the Fear of Contempt, of Hardſhips, of Poverty, of Shame, of Death, are each of them Cords that draw Men daily from their Integrity; and tho' they are all of different ſtrengths, yet by means of opportunity they all equally ſerve the Ends of the Tempter; inſomuch, that as many are debauch'd by the Fear of being laugh'd at, as by the Fear of being undone.

But the *Fear of God* is Armour of Proof againſt all theſe Temptations; it fortifies the Mind, and works it to firmneſs, ſuch a firmneſs

neſs as was glorious in the three *Iſraelites* in *Babylon*, who when the Queſtion was put, Whether they would worſhip the Image, or be caſt into the Furnace, they replied with all compoſedneſs, *Oh* Nebuchadnézzar, *we are not ſollicitous to anſwer thee about this matter:* As much as to ſay, The Queſtion which thou, O King, takeſt to be ſo puzling to us, by reaſon of its Terror, is not worthy the ſhorteſt of our Deliberations; we can reſolve in an inſtant what to do in this caſe, becauſe we were reſolved long ago to ſuffer any thing rather than God's Diſpleaſure.

I have thus far ſhewn the Reaſonableneſs and the preſent Advantages of the *Fear of God*, in order to evidence the Wiſdom of it; but I muſt carry the Argument a little farther. For, altho' all Men did not only deſire to be wiſe (as certainly they do) but would allow us this Point too, That *the fear of God is wiſdom*; yet this would not convince them, that they muſt neceſſarily *fear God*, in order to be wiſe, unleſs it appear likewiſe that they cannot be wiſe any other way: For, as when there are ſeveral Meats of ſeveral taſts, one Man's chuſing what he likes beſt does not

not tax the Diſcretion of a ſecond for chuſing of another kind; ſo, ſuppoſing there are ſeveral kinds of Wiſdom, ungodly men may acquit their Pretences to Wiſdom, by chuſing to be *wiſe after their own Palate*, and in their own way. I ſhall ſhew therefore in the next place, That no ſuch Choice is to be had; but that the *Fear of God* is ſo eſſential to Wiſdom, that there is no Wiſdom without it.

It is the deſign of holy *Job*, in the Chapter of my Text, to put us in mind, that there is a mighty Difference betwixt *to know* and *to be* wiſe: He tells us, That *Man findeth out the veins of ſilver, and the ore of gold, and the beds of ſapphires*: That *He cutteth out rivers among the rocks, and his eye ſeeth every precious thing*: That *He bindeth the floods from overflowing, and the thing that is hid he bringeth forth to light*. But amidſt all this, *Where* (ſays he) *ſhall wiſdom be found? and where is the place of underſtanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it to be found in the land of the living*. In which Paſſage the Holy Man intimates, that Wiſdom is the pure Gift of God, and that it cannot be found by the moſt curious

Enquiries into Nature: And we may add, That neither can it be found by the most curious Enquiries into Truth it self, whether Moral or Divine, till such time as Grace accompanies the Enquiry: For, a Man may know all the Offices and Bounds of Virtue, and all the Precepts and Ends of Religion, and yet not be wise, because Wisdom is not the Speculation of these things, but the Love and Practice of them. Wisdom is not only *Light*, but *Strength*, to the Understanding, whereby it is enabled to govern the Passions, and make the Life regular; whereas a bare Knowledge leaves the Understanding as *weak* in Government, and the Life as *irregular* as before; and (indeed) serves to nothing so much as the more inexcusable conviction of our Folly.

In ancient *Rome*, when the Empire was come to its height, and Learning and Arts were grown into reputation among them, it was the Fashion for such as aim'd at the Credit of being *Accomplish'd Gentlemen*, to frequent Conferences, and entertain the Company with Discourses of Philosophy, and all other Specimens of Study and Wit: In consequence

ſequence to this it hapned, that others, who had neither Parts nor Induſtry to accompliſh themſelves on this manner, and yet were ambitious to have a ſhare in every thing that made Men look Great; made it their Practice to buy ſome Learned Slaves out of *Greece*, and to carry thoſe about with them into Company, and there whatſoever Wit or Learning the Slaves could produce, *that* their Maſters look'd upon as their own, and took the Glory of it unto themſelves. How ridiculous ſoever the affectation of this Practice may ſeem, it is but too juſt an Emblem of the *Generality of Mankind*, priding themſelves in the attainment of *miſtaken Wiſdom*: For, while we pleaſe our ſelves with the knowledge of Arts, and Laws, and Policies, and Buſineſs, nay, of Virtue and Religion too, yet in the mean time our Underſtanding, the Faculty where this Treaſure of Knowledge lyes, is very often no other than a Slave, held in ſervitude to our Luſts and Paſſions: Theſe rule and command, like the *Roman Gallant*, and that only ſerves, like the *poor Greek*, to furniſh Matter for our Vanity; inſomuch, that we are not really the wiſer

for all the Wiſdom we carry about us. And thus it muſt be; nor can it ever be otherwiſe, till ſuch time as the *Fear of God* preſides over what we know, and directs it to the Purpoſes of a Holy Life.

As for the Opinion of the World in this preſent matter, which conferrs the Character of Wiſdom upon ſeveral human Endowments, however found ſeparate from the *Fear of God*; well may it paſs for a Courteſie, but its paſſing for a Due we have this Conſideration to hinder, (*viz.*) That not any of thoſe Endowments, no, nor all of them together, can prevent a Man from being a Fool.

And this is a Truth I ſhall chuſe to prove by Example, Example being a good Remembrancer, and this being a matter which we are not ſo like to doubt of, as to forget.

I ſhall begin with the Example of the *Rich Man*, mentioned St. *Luke* 12. who according to the vulgar Standard, muſt certainly paſs for a Wiſe Man; for, he underſtood Buſineſs, and Improvements, and Managery, as we may *gueſs* by the encreaſing of his Eſtate, and the enlarging of his Barns. And another piece of reputed Wiſdom he

was

was Maſter of too, that is, he reſolv'd to enjoy what he had: And yet how emphatically is this man call'd *Fool*, in his peremptory Summons from God? *Thou fool! this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee; and then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be that thou haſt provided?*

The next I ſhall mention is *Achitophel*, a man of ſuch ſagacity and inſight into Affairs, that (as the Sacred Story tells us) his Counſel upon all occaſions was, *As if a man had enquired at the oracle of God*; and yet this Great Man, for all his mighty Talent of Wiſdom, had ſo little as to make a violent end of himſelf upon a ſmall Affront, and ſo at one Act to cut himſelf off both from all the Enjoyments of this Life, and all the Hopes of a Future: Too great a Proof of being a Fool!

I ſhall end with the Example of *Solomon*, whoſe Character for Univerſal Wiſdom is this; *That there never was the like before him, nor ever ſhall be after him*; and yet ſo ſoon as he turned his Back upon the *Fear of God*, ſee whither he ſunk; *His heart clave unto ſtrange women; he had ſeven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines*: and foraſmuch as moſt

of

of them were Idolaters, he comply'd with them all, in worſhipping their ſeveral Idols. And now ſay how the weakeſt man in the World could have ſhew'd himſelf a greater Fool than *Solomon* did in theſe Extravagances. Well might he take it for his Motto, as he does in the Book of *Eccleſiaſtes* (which he is ſuppoſed to have written after his Recovery out of this Infatuation) *All is vanity, ---but the fear of God.*

And tho' perhaps few of thoſe that fear not God have Appetites to carry them to the Extravagances of *Solomon*, and fewer to the Deſperateneſs of *Achitophel*: yet none of them can eſcape the Folly of the firſt Inſtance; that is, to have their Soul ſtript of all its Enjoyments together, without the proviſion of any to ſucceed.

And therefore we may conclude, That whatever commendable things Human Wiſdom may do by the bye, yet it certainly fails of its main pretence; that is, of making a Man wiſe: For, it is not ſome Actions, done with the ſemblance of Diſcretion, in matters of ſmaller moment, but the Diſcretion a man ſhews in actions of chief concern,

cern, that must give him his Character. And what then must be the Character of those that always want Discretion in the main?

And now I shall leave the whole matter upon your Thoughts, under the illustration of this sensible Image, (*viz.*) *Human Wisdom*, (in the prospect of its whole management) looks like a man shewing great Skill in the choice of curious Paintings and Hangings, and other Rarities, wherewith to furnish his House, when all the while an Enemy is burning the Town: For, thus it is that Human Wisdom provides noble Furniture for the Soul, but never reflects that the Soul it self lyes perishing at the same instant. Knowledge, and Art, and Reasoning, and Experience, and Dexterity, are excellent Furniture, and these Human Wisdom brings in. But, in the mean time, what need of all this Sail to run against a Rock? What needs the Pomp of all these excellent Qualities to be undone, when a Man may be undone less reproachfully without them? For, it is certain that all these Qualities do not in the least prevent a Man's being undone; 'tis only

ly the *Fear of God* that can do that; and therefore we may most confidently determine, That *the Fear of God is the only Wisdom.*

This is Wisdom, not in Semblance, but in Deed; not Parcel-Wisdom, but Wisdom entire; not Wisdom for the Bye, but Wisdom for the Main; not Wisdom for a Day, but Wisdom for Ever.

To God, that is the Only Giver of this Wisdom, and of every Perfect Gift, *be all Glory*, &c.

AMEN.

Sermons written by the same Author, and sold by Walter Ketsilby.

A Sermon preach'd before the Lord Mayor, *Feb.* 4. 1682. on St. *Mat.* V. 3.

A Sermon, exhorting to Union in Religion, preach'd at *Bow*-Church, *May* 20. 1688. on St. *John* XVI. 31, 32.

A Sermon preach'd before the Queen on Easter-day, on 1 *Thess.* IV. 18.